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# Blackness and bilingualism: Language ideologies in the African American community

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# Blackness and bilingualism: Language ideologies in the African American community

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## Abstract

# Blackness & bilingualism: Language ideologies in the African American community

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This qualitative interpretivist study uses Richard Ruiz's language orientation framework to explore the perspectives of African Americans towards Spanish-English bilingualism as it relates to dual language education. Ruiz presented three ideologies towards minority languages: language as a problem, language as a right, and language as a resource (1984). Galindo later added the idea of language as a boundary (1997). This study attempts to add to these frameworks by providing an alternative perspective: a minority language as seen by members of another marginalized group.

Previous research demonstrates the potential of dual language programs to promote academic, linguistic, and cross-cultural competence in all students (Howard, Sugarman & Christian, 2003; Thomas & Collier, 2011), yet also suggests that African American students are experiencing limited inclusion in these types of programs (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2008; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). This project contributes to the scant but growing body of research on African American involvement in dual language by examining the existing language ideologies in the African American community towards multilingualism, specifically Spanish-English bilingualism. The researcher analyzed 5 semi-structured interviews with members of the African American community in one urban school district. Thematic coding revealed the representation of each of Ruiz's original orientations as well as Galindo's, however, the data analysis also

uncovered nuanced and additional ideologies emerging from the racial position of African Americans in U.S. society.

This project provides compelling insight into the perspectives of African Americans towards Spanish-English bilingualism. In practice, the implications of this study suggest alternative approaches to the design, recruitment, and implementation of dual language programs with African American students in mind. In theory, this study presents a racially nuanced understanding of Ruiz's original language orientation framework as well as engages in problematizing the existing raciolinguistic hierarchy of power in U.S. society.

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# Introduction

As schools work to prepare students for the globalized society in which they partake, the value of monolingualism is rapidly dwindling. Many districts are placing a greater focus on the instruction of world languages, and dual language education is one method that is becoming more popular amongst elementary schools. Dual language (DL) programs incorporate an additive, enrichment ideology, positioning bilingualism as a beneficial resource. A specific branch of Dual Language Education is two-way immersion (TWDLE) programs which include language minority and language majority students in the same classroom. Academic content instruction is delivered through the two languages, and the two student groups serve as language models for each other.

TWDLE programs are growing in popularity across the nation due to the great successes that TWDLE students, families, and school communities experience. Not only do students achieve the end goal of bilingualism and biliteracy, but they also benefit from high quality instruction as well as the development of a strong multicultural awareness and interpersonal skills. With such incredible outcomes, who would want to miss out on such a great opportunity?

Unfortunately, there are groups of students that continually are being excluded from participating in the program through a variety of factors. The existing literature, though scarce, points to the vast underrepresentation of African-American students in bilingual programs (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2008). While some efforts have been made to look at institutional factors that influence this disparity, this paper focuses on the

perspectives of members of the African American community towards Spanish-English bilingualism to unearth what existing ideologies might encourage or inhibit their students' participation. Ultimately this information could be valuable in designing, developing, and promoting Dual Language programs that would appeal to African American stakeholders and more equitably serve the student population.

First I will outline the theoretical frameworks that I am employing to analyze this study. Then, I will conduct a review of the literature that is pertinent to the experiences of African American students in Dual Language programs. Being that this is a fairly under-researched topic, I will draw on a broad scope of issues affecting this trend. Next, I will explain the context and methodology of this qualitative study and depict my positionality and its limitations. I will present the findings of my data analysis as they align to the language orientations presented by Ruiz (1984) and Galindo (1997) and then discuss the ideologies that did not exactly fit into these previous frameworks, which I argue results from a nuanced understanding of power, race, and language on behalf of the participants. I will conclude by suggesting implications and recommendations on how this study contributes to the conversation of raciolinguistic ideologies and the field of Dual Language education.

# Theoretical Frameworks

## CRITICAL RACE THEORY

In order to appropriately depict the context which lends itself to the discussion of the topic, I will employ a Critical Race theoretical framework. Critical Race Theory (CRT) first utilized in a legal setting acknowledges the implications of systemic racism in the United States as maintaining distinct separation of benefits and liberties experienced by groups of people based on their race. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) adapted this legal theory to the world of education as a method to analyze the existence of great inequities in the schooling experience of White students and their non-White counterparts. The historical underserving of Latino and African-American children in the U.S. school system plays a vital role in the conversation surrounding African-American students in Dual Language programs, and through a CRT lens, I argue that race in endemic in the design, development, and implementation of TWDLE programs.

I will particularly draw on interest convergence theory as it relates to this project. Bell (1980) suggested that policy decisions made at institutional levels that appear to benefit non-dominant groups in society only occur when members of the dominant group also profit. In Springwall's implementation of TWDLE programs, the interests of white affluent families and Spanish-speaking Latin@ students converged and subsequently excluded the perspectives of African American families from the conversation (Wall & Greer, 2015).

## LANGUAGE ORIENTATIONS

I draw on the language orientation frameworks of Ruiz (1986) and Galindo (1997) that explored the discourses surrounding the value of immigrant languages in the U.S. Ideologies are systems of understandings that serve to interpret reality as based on rationality and common sense. Ruiz argued that people engage in the presence and use of minority languages such as Spanish in one of three ways: language as a right, as a problem, or as a resource. Galindo contributed to this framework with the addition of language as a boundary.

| Orientation | Description | Example in Education |
|---|---|---|
| Problem | The minority language is tied to intellectual limitations and deficiencies. | "The problem is that these kids don't speak English. That's why they're failing." |
| Right | The community has the right to maintain the minority language. | "Children have the right to learn in and maintain their native language." |
| Boundary | Bilingualism bridges two communities. | "Teachers who speak the language of their students can teach them better." |
| Resource | The minority language is seen as a tool to better society. | "We need bilingual employees." |

Table 1: Language Orientations

Ruiz's initial framework was constructed within the concept of language planning being historically driven by the development of a nation-state. Much of the language planning activities responded to "language problems" by first identifying them and then providing possible resolutions. Ruiz described the ways that language became linked to social problems primarily associated with poverty, portraying minority languages and its speakers in a deficient light. According to Ruiz, as language planning had identified this

"problem," there was a movement that coincided with the War on Poverty to fix it by providing ESL instruction to language minority groups and aid in their acquisition and transition to English. Ultimately the goal of nation-state development and eliminating language problems is social cohesiveness, as Ruiz explained "multilingualism leads ultimately to a lack [thereof]; with everyone speaking their own language, political and social consensus is impossible" (1986, p. 21). This language as a problem ideology is widely adopted but heavily critiqued as the extinguishing of minority languages and the push for hegemonic dominance and forced assimilation negates and undermines the assets of minority language groups, in this study: Spanish speakers.

Ruiz's orientation of language as a right becomes of particular importance in this study, as it described language as a basic human right. Ruiz documented how the use of Spanish in legal, governmental, and educational settings became the civil rights issue for the Latino community, which creates an interesting background for our conversation of African Americans' orientation towards Spanish. As Ruiz stated, language as a right positions Spanish as "both a legal entitlement and a natural endowment" (p. 23). Ruiz recognized that within the language as a right debate, the intentions were to provide Americans linguistic flexibility to be able to access their individual civil rights and that speakers are not necessarily granted the right to employ and enjoy the language for itself. Furthermore, rights-claims create confrontation, and as Ruiz described, "creates a situation in which different groups and authorities invoke their rights against each other" (p. 24). As we interpret bilingual education as a right sanctioned for Spanish speakers, it

poses an interesting debate surrounding the rights that have been denied to African Americans throughout history.

In his seminal piece, Ruiz presented the language as a resource orientation in which the value of a minority language is acknowledged and the language becomes "a resource to be managed, developed, and conserved" (1986, p. 28). Ruiz suggested that language capability could serve the nation-state through national security, diplomacy, and globalized business. He also argued that it served the individual by strengthening their academic and cognitive functions as well as developing a critical awareness of other ways of thinking. Through the act of managing, developing, and conserving a minority language, its speakers are positioned as "important sources of expertise" (1986, p. 28). Ruiz concluded combatting the language as a problem concerns that attribute divisiveness to multilingualism by arguing that valuing minority language groups could only lead to greater national cohesion and collaboration.

Years later, Galindo added to Ruiz's original framework by introducing the language as a boundary orientation (1997). In his study involving Spanish-speaking parents and students, he identified the ways in which speaking a minority language presented social boundaries and documented how the participants foresaw bilingualism as a bridge to transcend those boundaries. Parents looked to their bilingual children as language brokers who could navigate both sides of the divide and aid them in their daily interactions in the English-speaking world. The orientation of language as a boundary constructs a vision of the realities of minority language speakers in an English-dominant world as well as that of English speakers' perception of minority language speakers.

## RACIOLINGUISTIC IDEOLOGIES

Recent theorizing by Flores and Rosa (2015) explored the co-construction of raciolinguistic ideologies. They rejected the subscription to standardized language practices that are appropriate to academic settings arguing that ideologies are formed not by the language used but rather the position of the user in society. This positioning stems from racial underpinnings and influences one's interpretation of the racialized speaker's practices as deficient regardless of how closely they align to the standardized language. This frames for us the traditional positioning of African Americans within a hierarchy of raciolinguistic power dominated by white hegemonic linguistic practices and within which they will constantly be perceived as deficient, helping us to approach the orientations of the participants towards Spanish-English bilingualism within this racialized context.

# Literature Review

## Language Learning Benefits

Multilingualism has a vast set of benefits for the individual as well as for society. Internally, bilinguals experience a heightened self-concept and strong cognitive abilities particularly in memory, flexible and creative thinking, and the organization of information (Bialystok & Martin, 2004; Kormi-Nouri, Moniri & Nilson, 2003; Dorney, 2005; Rubio, 2007). They also develop metalinguistic skills that allow for deciphering and connecting between languages' vocabulary, semantics, and grammar resulting in an advanced linguistic repertoire (Stewart, 2005; Kimbrough Oller & Eilers, 2002). Bilingual students have also shown higher levels of academic performance than their monolingual peers as well as a strengthened mastery in their native language abilities and understandings (Archibald, Roy, Harmel & Jesney, 2006; Armstrong & Rogers, 1997; Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004). Externally, bilinguals exhibit an advanced level of cross-cultural understanding, a broadened worldview, a positive attitude toward the L2 and its speakers, and an increased value of cultural pluralism (Lipton, 2004; Marcos, 1998; Noels, Pelletier, Clement & Vallerand, 2003). Many researchers also recommend language learning because of the greater opportunities that multilingualism provides in professional and educational potential, travel, interpersonal relations, and interpreting the arts (Callahan & Gandara, 2015; Lantolf & Sunderman, 2001; Trimnell, 2005). Particularly for the United States, a predominantly monolingual nation with a history of assimilationist and English-only policies, researchers have argued that much work in

world language instruction is needed to attain the spirit of multilingualism comparative to other regions of the world (Tochon, 2009).

## DUAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Dual Language (DL) education is a form of bilingual education that supports an enrichment model and has end goals of bilingualism, biliteracy, and cross-cultural competence for all students in the classroom (Freeman, 2004; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Thomas & Collier, 2011). Dual Language programs that provide L2 immersion throughout elementary schooling take advantage of the optimal age window for language development. The critical period hypothesis of second language acquisition theory points to a decline in the ability to learn a new language with age. Much empirical evidence adheres to this theory and supports the capacity for language learning at an early age attributed to a variety of physiological (Moyer, 1999), cognitive (Seidenberg & Zevin, 2006), and socioemotional (Robertson, 2002) factors. DL programs optimize the capacity for second language development by providing quality language instruction and utilizing this critical period to foment lifelong bilinguals and biliterates.

More specifically, the two-way immersion (TWDLE) model of Dual Language education involves students from the minority and majority language groups learning content through both languages. Students also learn from each other as each student serves as a peer model in the language(s) that s/he masters. Crawford (2004) attributed TWDLE's popularity to its reputation as "'the best of both worlds'... a chance... to become fluent in two languages and to excel academically at the same time" (pg. 47).

The cognitive, academic, and cross-cultural benefits of foreign language study are amplified in the TWDLE (Two-Way Dual Language Education) context. In a review of the research surrounding the effectiveness of TWDLE programs, Howard et al. concluded that "both native Spanish speakers and native English speakers in TWDLE programs perform as well or better than their peers educated in other types of programs, both on English standardized achievement tests and Spanish standardized achievement tests" (2003, pg. 19). Thomas and Collier's report of the data they collected in North Carolina showed "Reading and Math scores of students in two-way dual language education are higher for all students regardless of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic, LEP or special education status" (2011, pg. 2).

In a review of the research surrounding the effectiveness of TWDLE programs, Howard et al. concluded that "On aggregate, the research summarized in this section indicates that both native Spanish speakers and native English speakers in TWDLE programs perform as well or better than their peers educated in other types of programs, both on English standardized achievement tests and Spanish standardized achievement tests" (2003, pg. 19). Thomas and Collier's research which is quickly making a case for the effectiveness of TWDLE programs in North Carolina adhered to these findings showing DL participants, including African-American students, to meet or outperform their peers in English-only classrooms (2011). Also in comparison to mainstream English classrooms, Thomas and Collier found DL education to be successful in decreasing the achievement gaps between all subgroups, including that which appears on the assessment data of performance level between Black and White students (2011). While not

eliminating or undoing the products of centuries of oppressive social and educational practices on Black students, the argument that DL education can be influential in the effort to deconstruct inequities is validated by the assessment performance data provided here.

As Hernandez (2011) described in her unpublished dissertation, Dual Language teachers employ different attitudes, goals, and instructional practices in order to facilitate language and content learning for both language majority and minority students. Strategies such as SIOP, TPR, explicit vocabulary and grammatical instruction serve students who face a language barrier, strengthening the comprehensible input for students in both languages. She argued that if a TWDLE classroom abides by the four guiding principles of DL programs: research-based practices, instructional strategies, student-centered instruction, and multicultural/multilingual learning environments, an extremely high-caliber education is delivered (Hernandez, 2011).

Reyes argued that in TWDLE classrooms language majority as well as language minority students have the opportunity to develop a strong multicultural awareness and ability to navigate different cultural environments (2007). She also praised the positive identity development of all students but especially that of the language minority students whose linguistic and ethnic backgrounds are validated and celebrated. As evidenced, TWDLE programs have the opportunity to provide great academic, linguistic, and social success to their participants.

## Challenges of Equity in Dual Language

At the same time, two-way immersion programs are not the silver bullet to solving equity issues for language majority nor minority students. From a CRT lens, one could criticize that TWDLE programs are birthed from the convergence of interests. Interest convergence was defined by Dixson and Rosseau as a situation where "the rights of oppressed groups are recognized and legitimated only when they further the interests of the dominant class and of society's governing institutions" (2006, pg. 158). In this sense, an additive enrichment model of bilingual education for language minority students gains political support when also serving the dominant White English-speaking student group, exemplified in the structural model of TWDLE. If not implemented critically and in a way best fit for the school's population, the imbalance of resources, power, and performance between student groups could be perpetuated and even exacerbated. This convergence of interests is particularly compelling when looking at African-American student participation in TWDLE programs as they are not members of the dominant nor marginalized group involved in this scenario. TWDLE programs can appease the dominant group of elective language learners while providing educational equity for language minority students through native language instruction but neglects and excludes African American students as potential benefactors of the educational opportunities produced by this convergence of interests.

Ladson-Billings and Tate presented the historical foundation of racism in the U.S. stemming from priority of property rights over human rights, which has evolved into the possession of the ultimate property in present day: Whiteness (1995). In the case of

White students' eager participation in and Black students' under-representation in Dual Language programs, we see the property of Whiteness manifesting itself in Ladson-Billings' examples of "the right to use and enjoyment" and the "absolute right to exclude" (1995, pg. 59-60). White students' families enhance their cultural capital through connections, lotteries, and transfers to ensure their inclusion in the program at the expense of African-American students' exclusion, as described in Palmer's analysis of the (in)equity of a Dual Language program in a California school (2010).

The school which Palmer observed implemented a DL program with the goal of integration, yet African-American students still remained segregated by their exclusion from the program. The DL strand classrooms boasted a dichotomous Latin@/White makeup, which left the mainstream English-only classrooms with predominantly Black student groups. It was observed that many students, including African-American students, were challenged in securing a spot in the DL classroom because of their August registration. Many student spots in the program were filled beginning in February by eager White middle-class students whose parents preemptively advocate for their placement, exploiting the privilege that their Whiteness entails. Due to racialized historical processes of wealth and access to information, African American families were inhibited in their abilities to engage in these registration processes. This school and community also had a history of past practices where African American students had been placed in the bilingual classrooms as a derogatory removal from English-only classrooms due to their behavior, which had created in the Black community an association with bilingual programs as a violation of educational equity. When

considering the interest convergence, Critical Race Theorists would argue that while Latin@s benefit from participation in a TWDLE program, with the intention of supporting educational equity, White families' determination to secure their spots in the English-speaking pool subsequently displacing African-American students substantiates a self-serving motive rather than the end goal of integration and equality for all.

Historically, Black students have experienced a limited participation in learning a language other than English. Alvarez Harvey (1974) attributed this to the marginalization of Black peoples and the resulting tendency to be "consumed by navigating his(/her) own blackness" in American society limiting their abilities to become aware of other cultures (pg. 321). In a more systematic sense, Hubbard (1980) claimed that Foreign Language Education has been traditionally elitist and was not even promoted in many urban and minority schools in the past. He went on to cite the deficit attitudes towards African-American students that assume their inability to succeed in learning another language, stating particularly the shared false belief that one must adequately govern the use of Standard English before pursuing a second language. He refuted this idea by claiming that a foreign language classroom is one of the first schooling environments in which Black students can enter at a level playing field with other students since Standard English language barriers are eliminated. He also celebrates the ability of the L2 to improve the understanding of concepts in students' L1, creating for Black students greater English proficiency. Unfortunately, these arguments contain traces of deficit ideologies towards Black language, likely due to the date of its publication, but

Hubbard's attack on systemic trends that created racial inequities in the stage of FLE relates to the background of the discussion at hand.

Pratt (2012) explored the question of African-American students' motivation to learn Spanish in high school and found it to be equal to that of other English speakers'. In this study however, this motivation waned for Black students due to the lack of bilingual role models, parental support, and adequate career counseling, which were all prominent influential factors for other speakers of English. Hubbard stressed the importance of the Black community's needed shift to embrace a more globally-oriented perspective as it relates to the success of African- American students in the future job market and society (1980). African-Americans' participation in TWDLE programs is a quintessential pathway to language learning and the strengthening of skills to be prepared for the world of the 21st century.

## Context of the Study

This context brings us to our present study conducted in the historically Black section of a growing city that is changing as it experiences large-scale gentrification and an increasing Latino population ("Top Ten Demographic Trends", 2014). This study focuses in on this community and investigates the current situation of African-American student participation in the Dual Language programs in Springwall Independent School District (ISD), a large urban school district in the Southwest region of the United States. Springwall began a district-wide implementation of DLBE from the previous transitional bilingual education program during the 2010-2011 school year with ten pilot schools, four of which were TWDL programs that African Americans could potentially access. At the time of the study, the number of TWDLE programs had increased to fifteen, but concerns from the community and the district acknowledge the continued underrepresentation of African-American students in the DL programs. After working with a colleague on a study that documented the district's institutional decisions that served as barriers in facilitating the participation of African American students in two-way programs, I wanted to gain the community's perspectives and examine other factors influencing this situation.

In this study, I sought to explore the inclinations and ideologies toward bilingualism of various members of the African American community who are involved in the district process of educating African American students. I was interested in learning about what perspectives motivate or hinder the African American community's participation in DL programs. I foresee this information as being influential in

Springwall ISD's design to recruit more African-American students and families to the programs.

## Methods

The underrepresentation of African-American participation in TWDLE programs results in a gap in the literature, which I seek to slightly fill through this qualitative study (Miles, Huberman, Zaldana, 2014). In this investigation, I was seeking to uncover what dispositions members of the African-American community had towards bilingualism and was curious about how they could be connected to student participation in Springwall TWDL programs. To guide my study of African-American community language ideologies, I asked:

*What is the perceived value of bilingualism for African Americans in this community? What are the potential benefits and consequences of becoming bilingual as understood in this community for an African American?*

Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, collected between June 2015 and September 2015, served as my primary source of data. I used an interview protocol (Appendix A) that included open-ended questions and allowed for further exploration and investigation of participants' responses as deemed appropriate during the interview. I reached out to people who identify as African American through personal and professional connections and selected five participants, four of which work in association with Springwall ISD and four of which are parents. These participants were purposefully selected to gain a complex understanding of African American educational stakeholders' language ideologies towards Spanish-English bilingualism. While the participants were intended to represent different ages, backgrounds, genders, and roles of members of the Black community, this study is limited as it is constituted of a small sample of people who share the commonality of a personal or professional connection to the researcher.

Two of the participants were affiliated with The Williamson Group, a private educational organization that has developed and implemented a Pre-K Spanish immersion program originally intended for African-American students. Mr. Williamson, the organization's founder who is also an African-American community activist, has worked since 2007 in collaboration with Springwall ISD through the Pre-K program as well as in his service on the Dual Language Advisory board. Ms. Lloyd, an African-American educator, was working for The Williamson Group as the Spanish teacher in a 5-week summer pilot program conducted at a preschool affiliated with a local, historically Black church. Two other participants were affiliated with an elementary school in Springwall ISD that did not have a TWDLE program but rather a one-way despite hosting an adequate portion of native English-speaking African-American students. Both Mr. Dixon, the head custodian, and Ms. Edmonds, a pre-K assistant teacher, identify as African-American and share the unique experience of working within a bilingual environment as a monolingual person, similar to that of the African-American students at the school. In this study, each participant was interviewed one time for 20-30 minutes and then contacted again for member checking. Additional data sources included field notes from a classroom observation and The Williamson Group promotional materials as well as a manuscript written by Mr. Williamson himself.

| **Name** | **Age** | **Role** | **Language** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mr. Williamson | 70+ | Director of the educational non-profit | Monolingual, English |
| Ms. Lloyd | Late 20's | Spanish teacher | Trilingual, Spanish English French |
| Mr. Carter | Late 20's | Father, entertainment industry | Monolingual, English |
| Mr. Dixon | Late 50's | School custodian, father | Monolingual, English |
| Ms. Edmonds | Late 50's | Pre-K assistant teacher, mother | Monolingual, English |

Table 2: Study Participants

I conducted a thematic analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Zaldana, 2014) of qualitative data searching for themes that aligned with the language orientations framework presented by Ruiz (1984) and Galindo (1997). I found representations of each orientation: language as a problem, language as a right, language as a boundary, and language as a resource. Still, I found myself with data representing perspectives that did not fit into the original four language ideologies I was using. I took into account the nuanced raciolinguistic perspectives that impact the participants' accounts and proposed a new orientation of language as power within different racialized contexts.

## Positionality

As a researcher from a white middle-class background, constant reflexivity was key in thinking about how my identity and life experiences shaped my perceptions of participants and of the data. As a trilingual educator, I greatly value the benefits of foreign language study and often observe how my diverse linguistic repertoire has led to not only travel, cross-cultural understanding, and job security but also to a stronger worldview and inclination toward social justice. I am current and former Spanish-English Dual Language teacher and have witnessed underrepresentation, exclusion, and removal of African American students from dual language classrooms. I have also seen African American students as highly successful language learners and wanted to explore the factors affecting the situation. I realized my largely outsider status and limited access to the African American community so I used professional and personal connections to select participants to guide my project. While voice is crucial to CRT work, the presence of Black voices during my study was very telling of the perspectives in the African American community. I was able to engage in member checking of my findings with the interview participants as well as strengthened my relationship with Mr. Williamson and his project which has led to continued collaboration on addressing equity issues for African American participation in DL programs.

# Findings

## LANGUAGE AS A RESOURCE

Some of the comments made by the participants aligned with the ideology of "language as a resource" as originally proposed by Ruiz (1984). In this sense, a minority language such as Spanish is viewed as valuable, allowing its speaker to better participate in society, be it in social, economic, political or cultural domains.

Particularly all participants saw Spanish-English bilingualism as an economic resource that allows people more, different, and better opportunities in employment. When asked to describe the value of bilingualism, Mr. Carter's first response was, "It means a new job!" Similarly, Mr. Williamson began by saying, "Economics. Employment patterns. Population diversity - particularly in Springwall. Businesses keep popping up wanting to hire bilingual peoples." All participants saw evidence of bilingual Latin@s benefiting from their ability to speak two languages in the job market and expressed the belief that as African Americans they would be in a better position to compete for jobs should they speak Spanish. Mr. Williamson highlighted the nation's newfound desire for bilingual employees with urgency and recognized these trends as economically driven responses to the demands of the population, indicating a strong interaction and dependency between education, economics, and society.

Ms. Lloyd echoed similar understandings and deemed it the responsibility of education to prepare students for the realities of the working world. She discussed the ability to map out population, and therefore, language shifts ten years in advance and recommended that schools mirror these linguistic trends by teaching students the most

useful languages other than English: Spanish, Mandarin, and Hindi. When asked about the idea of African-Americans learning Swahili, Mr. Williamson expressed guarded support: "Go 'head! Nobody stoppin' you! But Spanish is what's on the table. Numbers dictate policy." Through this comment, he demonstrated a general appreciation for bilingualism, but it is clear that his preference for Spanish-English bilingualism stems from an economic motivation. Many other participants shared this sentiment, agreeing that if they or anyone else were to learn another language, it should be Spanish especially in the context of their city and their Southwestern state.

Participants also saw bilingualism and speaking more than one language as valuable knowledge that allows for better communication and access to more people. Ms. Edmonds shared stories of when her son used his minimal Spanish to help a Spanish-speaking man in the hardware store and of how the Pre-K students in her class play together and try to talk despite their language boundaries. Mr. Carter drew on the ways that bilingualism allows for networking, relationships, and cross-cultural understanding to develop which are of particular importance in a society that he depicted as very multicultural, multilingual, and hybridized. He also portrayed the foreign language as a very generic, isolated body of knowledge that could be downloaded for the speaker's needs and joked, "Literally from Google Translate if I need it!" While he acknowledged the need for a language other than English to be able to communicate with someone of a different language background, he did not seem to notice the cultural linguistic ties of the language minority population or the ways that his identity could possibly shift as he acquires new ways of talking and in turn new ways of being.

While all participants regarded Spanish-English bilingualism as a potential fix to the community's economic woes as well as a tool for communication, only Ms. Lloyd also saw the language as a resource that would serve African-American culture and identity. She viewed Spanish as an avenue to connect with other people and learn about other cultures in a way that would then strengthen the community's Blackness. She discussed the existing diversity within Spanish-speaking populations, speaking of indigenous peoples, Asian and German South American immigrants, and repeatedly mentioning Afrolatin@s as examples of the complex racial makeup of Latin America. She stressed that by learning about other countries' cultural traditions and from their political histories, African-Americans could develop a richer culture and a greater resiliency. She also saw African-Americans as partners, models, and resources for Black Latinos, saying, "You got Dominicans, Haitians, AfroLatin@s. They're dealing with conflict and identity issues. I think if we are solidified in our Blackness and who we are, it would help them. There's nothing but good to come of it." She envisioned powerful conversations that could occur between African-Americans, Haitians, and Dominicans and saw Spanish-English bilingualism as a resource in navigating these cultural territories.

In this analysis, we see evidence of Spanish as a valuable resource for economic, social, and cultural benefits, as Ruiz had originally proposed. Thomas Ricento critiqued this notion of language as a resource in language planning as it becomes a resource to be maintained and developed all in the purposes of serving the nation-state (2005). The language is not seen as a resource in and for the language minority community; as

Ricento stated, "This leaves the impression that it is the *languages* that matter most, not the people who speak them, let alone the communities in which they are used" (2005, p. 359). We see evidence of this ideology in the ways that the participants mostly conceptualize the resource of Spanish as decontextualized knowledge that then affords certain benefits for individuals. This alignment with the dominant group and the nation-state becomes telling later as we explore the ways that the raciolinguistic positioning of the participants influences their orientations.

### LANGUAGE AS A BOUNDARY

Galindo presented the discourse of "language as a boundary" acknowledging the potential separation of two peoples from a division in language (1997). The social, political, and economic patterns of Springwall along with other cities has led Latinos and African-Americans to share neighborhoods, schools, and job markets. With respect to these trends, the participants affirmed that anti-immigrant apprehensions such as job competition, battles for territory, and intercultural tensions haunt the members of the African-American community of Springwall as they struggle to negotiate the changing realities of their city and its demographics. In the context of this study, the Latino and the African-American communities were sharing spaces in the city but were described as divided due to the lack of a common language.

Mr. Carter and Mr. Dixon consistently described the Latino community as extremely tightknit and exclusive. Both shared observations that Latin@s in Springwall have been able to maintain their language, culture, and family ties in a sustainable way. Mr. Dixon explained that his neighborhood and apartment complex is owned, managed,

and inhabited by predominantly Latino persons, stating that "they be born here and they just keep their language and start a business and hire everyone in their family… They got they own things that they do." Mr. Dixon was referring to what many would deem an admirable quest by the Latino community for cultural, linguistic, and familial preservation. While he offered this description with a neutral connotation, he acknowledged this exclusivity as influential in the limited intermingling between the Black and Latino community.

Mr. Williamson, on the other hand, expressed constant concern for the strain between the two groups particularly over job and housing competition. He stated, "If people can't communicate through language, there's always gonna be tension. The unity will come when we learn the language." This tension that he alluded to can manifest itself in a racialized encounter between two individuals passing on the street or as part of a larger anti-immigrant discourse with political implications, and he was accusing the language barrier as being highly causal in these problematic consequences. He expressed resistance to these negative consequences and strongly positioned Spanish-English bilingualism as a solution to fix these ever-threatening circumstances.

Furthermore, all participants saw great possibility in the development of *their own* Spanish-English bilingualism as a solution to this barrier as opposed to forcing English-only assimilation upon the Latino populations. Galindo developed this language as a boundary ideology along with the belief that "bilingualism (is) a bridge between communities and bilinguals as the mediators who break down boundaries between them" (1997, p. 15). Ms. Lloyd's language agreed with this notion, describing bilingualism as

capable of "unit[ing] two different worlds" and "avoid[ing] negative effects such as prejudice, racism, and competition over jobs." The end goals of unity and triumph over prejudice position bilingualism as a wildly positive phenomenon with "nothing but good to come of it," as reiterated by Ms. Lloyd.

Ultimately this unity stems from the humanization of the Latin@s and Spanish speakers in the eyes of the African American community. Mr. Carter alluded to these ideas when he described what he constructed as humans' innate desire to communicate with everybody. He was imagining his son in a classroom making friends with his classmates regardless of their race or language, and said, "You wanna know them as a person and love them first and then in doing that you'll want to learn that language." While Mr. Carter began this statement with a tinge of colorblindness, he progressed to acknowledge that linguistic boundaries exist and through acquiring bilingualism, relationships can be built between two people. Ms. Lloyd profoundly proclaimed her value of the basic belief in humanity as she said, "If you are able to communicate, you see that everybody has a beautiful story and we're all just trying to get by." This statement makes each person's life journey of celebrations and suffering come alive and demonstrates her ability to see the "Other" as multi-dimensional and humanistic, a finding she attributes to bilingualism. While she did not explicitly expand on this herself, one could wonder if this solidarity that comes in "getting by" could be attributed to the fact that African Americans and Latinos are both marginalized populations, hinting towards the possibility of relatability, compassion, and unity between oppressed groups.

### LANGUAGE AS A PROBLEM & LANGUAGE AS A RIGHT

The participants' interviews exposed two of Ruiz's original language orientations as interconnected in a nuanced, racialized understanding of language as a problem and language as a right. The participants perceived language as a problem and language as a right differently than how Ruiz had intended, and I would argue this emerges from the similar racial positioning in society of African American and Latino populations and consequently the way that this positioning dictates how their language is interpreted by the white listening subject (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Flores and Rosa constructed the "white listening subject" to imply that despite a speaking subject's ability to adhere to linguistic practices of the dominant group, his/her speech will always be interpreted through their racial positioning within mainstream white society. In this sense, Latin@s and African Americans share a reality in that they are consistently considered communicatively deficient. This framing lends itself to a redefining of the language as a right and as a problem ideologies through this raciolinguistic lens. In some instances, the participants claimed their own monolingualism as a right, positioning Spanish speakers' bilingualism as a problem. Other times, they acknowledged their own monolingualism as problematic and argued that they be afforded the same right and opportunity to be bilingual as Spanish speakers. In these ideologies we observe a competitive nature between these two groups as they share in a similar raciolinguistic positioning but also share resources such as neighborhoods, schools, and jobs.

As members of a marginalized raciolinguistic community, African Americans have had a tumultuous history with the power dynamics complicit with English use in the

United States. As they were denied the maintenance of African heritage languages, forced into English through assimilation, and then stigmatized for the use of African American Vernacular English, African Americans have been repeatedly limited in their ability to assert power through language. Drawing on Flores and Rosa's work, we are able to see the raciolinguistic positioning of African Americans in the context of the U.S. (2015). This is significant when considering African Americans' English use under the White gaze which Flores and Rosa argued "is attached both to a speaking subject who engages in the idealized linguistic practices of whiteness and to a listening subject who hears and interprets the linguistic practices of language-minoritized populations as deviant based on their racial positioning in society as opposed to any objective characteristics of their language use" (2015, p. 51). This frames for us the traditional positioning of African Americans within a hierarchy of linguistic power and allows us to explore the orientations of the participants towards Spanish-English bilingualism as a problem and as a right within this racialized context.

As members of a group whose English is perhaps broadly critiqued as "not good enough," a few of the participants asserted power in their English-only monolingualism, arguing for it as a right and pinning bilingualism as the problem. For example, Mr. Dixon expressed frustration from when he had moved to Springwall and was looking for a job. Despite his supervisory experience, he was overlooked for many jobs because of his monolingualism. "I don't think that's right. If I got the experience, I don't think I should have to know two languages… They should learn to speak the language that I speak especially by being here in America." Mr. Dixon is arguing for his right to be

monolingual, which leads him to engage in an English-only discourse. Later in the conversation, he posed the question of why he would want to learn Spanish when "they're trying to learn our language." Mr. Dixon claiming of American English as "our" own as an African American speaks to the power that he feels as a monolingual English speaker in this context which he might not to be able to feel under the White gaze. He speaks from a space of empowerment as an English model, which is very pertinent in our discussion of African American students in two-way Dual Language classrooms. At the same time, these comments do paint Spanish as a problem that society needs to overcome and speakers need to be transitioned out of, which is problematic.

On the other hand, Ms. Edmonds recounted a similar experience where she struggled to find a job because she is not bilingual. "I don't think it's wrong to be bilingual and I'm pretty sure I need to learn Spanish," she said, "But in the meantime when I'm trying to get a job and I'm not bilingual that kinda hurts me." Of course, she felt frustration, but unlike Mr. Dixon, she positioned her monolingualism as the problem rather than the bilingualism of the other applicants. Later in her interview, she lamented schools depriving African American students of the "right" to learn Spanish too, which is likely reminiscent of her own situation. She as well as Mr. Dixon shared the belief that African American students should be taught Spanish, and by not doing so, schools were perpetuating another "unfair" setup where Black children were forgotten, alienated, left behind, and held back.

Mr. Williamson's organization and advocacy is driven by this same ideology – that English speakers, particularly African Americans, have the right to learn Spanish and

become bilingual too. In a manuscript written by Mr. Williamson, he described the experience of Kunta Kinte, a character in the novel Roots (Haley, 1976). Kunta was abducted from his village in The Gambia in the 1700's and brought to the United States as a slave. Mr. Williamson drew on the linguistic commentary from the book, noting Kunta's wish to speak many tribal languages as his uncles did so as to communicate with the other kidnapped slaves on the ship. Haley describes the excitement with which the men on the ship taught each other new words in their languages, and Mr. Williamson noted this intensity as an example of the virtue of multilingualism, which enables communication amongst people. This account humanizes the ancestors of African-Americans and demonstrates an early disposition to language learning amongst the Black community. Mr. Williamson was keen to commence his manuscript with this narrative because it speaks volumes to his project of portraying bilingualism as powerful to the African-American community.

Mr. Williamson then went on to describe the ways in which the men who were imported as slaves were later stripped of their cultural ties to Africa, including their languages, and forced into assimilation through Christianity and English. He compared this history to the current context of Latino migration with a tinge of resentment. While he acknowledged the early imposition of forced assimilation and Whitewashing practices upon Mexicans in Southwestern U.S., he perceived the contemporary experience of Latin@s in the U.S. as opposite of that of Kunta and other African ancestors. He considered national inclinations toward bilingual education and multicultural awareness as projects in not only the accommodation but further preservation and promotion of

Spanish and Latino heritage, rights that were "not afforded to African Americans" (2015, p. 1). Mr. Williamson's interpretations of these two communities' sociopolitical histories indicates the complexities of his ideological approach to bilingualism in the current context. While he positions multilingualism as a community value dating back to his ancestors and appreciates the open avenues that multilingualism affords, he still uncovers wounds that are sources of resistance and resentment towards the Latino community and the Spanish language.

Mr. Williamson concluded his manuscript by explaining his arrival at the formation of The Williamson Group and the Spanish immersion Pre-K program. He critiqued the appropriation of bilingual education as only for language minority students and argued for access to bilingual programs as the right of language majority students as well. He wrote, "This effort will not deny the population the right to equal education, the opportunity to participate on equal footing as members of the future workforce, and will allow two communities to begin to come to an understanding and appreciation of one another." It is evident that he sees the acquisition of Spanish as powerful in providing English speakers with opportunities equal to that of Spanish speakers in the academic and professional realms but also as essential in the societal quest for cultural pluralism and harmonious co-existence.

# Discussion

## LANGUAGE, RACE, AND POWER

In analyzing the participants' comments and artifacts, we gain great insight to the uniqueness of an African American ideological perspective of Spanish-English bilingualism. These snapshots contribute to the discussion of raciolinguistic discourse as pioneered by Flores and Rosa and more practically to the larger conversation about the underrepresentation of African-American students in Dual Language programs. While Wall and Greer (2015) have data pointing to mishandlings by Springwall ISD that have led to systemic exclusion of African-American students in TWDLE programs, this study gives us examples of community perceptions that can and have played a role in this structural imbalance as well. From this data analysis, we are better prepared to design TWDLE programs that respond to the unique ideologies and goals of the African-American community in Springwall.

## LANGUAGE AS POWER: A RACIALIZED ORIENTATION

While Ruiz and Galindo's frameworks allowed us a framework to begin to interpret the data provided by the participants, there were many recurring themes that did not neatly fit into the categories of language as a problem, right, resource or boundary. I argue that these remaining comments can only be understood through a critical lens that encompasses the intersections of language, race, and power. Critical Race Theorists argue that race plays a role in all institutions and interactions in this country, and Flores and Rosa suggested that language ideologies are developed and sustained through the dimensions of race (2015). In this study, all participants, from the racial positioning of

themselves as African Americans, associated language with power and constructed three nuanced racialized notions of Spanish-English bilingualism as empowered by the "Other", by Whiteness, and by Blackness. When Spanish was "Other"-ed, it was constructed as Latino and untouchable; when it was perceived as White, it was imposed and resisted, and when it was designated as a component of Blackness, it was embraced and embodied. It is important to note no participant strictly adhered to assigning Spanish-English bilingualism to one racial identity but rather demonstrated a complex and fluid understanding of to whom Spanish "belonged."


Illustration 1: Racialized Orientations

**"Other"-ed bilingualism**

In many instances, the Spanish language was "Other"-ed. Both Mr. Williamson and Ms. Lloyd highlighted the perception in the Black community that Spanish was of someone else and not "ours." In this sense, Spanish is spoken in other countries, and in the U.S. it is seen as the language of the Mexicans, the Central Americans, and the immigrants. It is perceived that for Spanish to be Black, it must be actively sought and learned or even "downloaded" as referenced by Mr. Carter. This ideology portrays

Spanish with an othered identity or no identity at all, falsely isolating language practice from its speakers and their culture.

When asked about why African Americans may not learn Spanish, most participants referenced a lack of immediacy and pertinence to their daily lives. They portrayed a reality of the restrictive and oppressive conditions in which they were living as African Americans and described the ways that they get so "caught up" in their own daily lives that the opportunity passes people by. This is exactly the reflection of Harvey (1974) who had speculated that the struggle of navigating life in society as a Black person is consumptive enough. Also throughout the conversations, participants questioned the immediacy of Spanish in their daily lives, referring to this disparity as a reason for not learning Spanish.

This "other"ing taps into naive appropriations of racial and linguistic association as perceived by members of the African-American community. While Ms. Lloyd acknowledged the racially Black component of most Latino populations as well as peoples that identify as Black such as Afrolatin@s and Dominicans, she expressed concern that many members of the African-American community were unaware of these connections. Mr. Williamson, a native of Springwall, positioned Spanish as the language of the Latinos in the neighborhood and even more so as that of the new immigrants rather than that of the longstanding inhabitants of Springwall and the Southwest. These habits of racial and linguistic pairing demonstrate a common trend of strict categorization of people in this country in ways that do not always embrace the hybridity of cultures or life

experiences and leaves little room for the imagination. This limits our ability to envision new identities such as a bilingual African American or a Swahili-speaking Latino.

It is important to acknowledge the feelings that accompany this separation of racial groups and this "Other"ing of the Spanish language. The experience of the Latino community may be perceived by many as voluntary immigration from Mexico or Central America, and as Mr. Williamson touched on, bilingual education programs and the proliferation of Spanish in Springwall could be interpreted as an accommodation and inclusion of a people's heritage language and culture. This image presents a stark contrast to the experiences of African ancestors who were kidnapped, enslaved, and stripped of their languages and cultural ties. Feelings of resentment, envy, and defensiveness could easily creep into African-Americans' attitudes toward Latino people and the Spanish language; these sentiments can greatly affect the community's language ideologies.

Furthermore, when taking a raciolinguistic perspective, we see notions of power and hierarchy at play within these tensions between African Americans and Latin@s. As we noticed in the participants' comments, they perceive bilingualism to be a resource in terms of employment and financial advancement, but particularly bilingualism in Spanish in the context of their surroundings. They also accredited Spanish with a pervasive power, making comments about "Spanish being everywhere" and "Hispanics taking control" (Mr. Dixon, interview; Ms. Edmonds, interview). By paying attention to the unique racial positioning of African Americans in U.S. society, we can see how the threat of hegemonic Spanish can be highly intimidating to the participants and members of the

Black community. In this light, Spanish is seen as powerful and as a right and a possession of the Other, confirming the participants' fears that African Americans are being excluded and left behind. At the same time, the participants argue for inclusion in bilingual programs with the thought that access to this code of power would resituate them in the power hierarchy of society, as it has in their perception, for the Latin@s.

**White bilingualism**

Whiteness is understood as a set of practices, beliefs, and characteristics that have been socially constructed to represent the Anglo group in power. From a CRT standpoint, Ladson-Billings and Tate proposed Whiteness as a property that allows privilege to its possessor and permits the exclusion of others from the same benefits (1995). When situated within the existing literature, we see evidence of "foreign" language study as a privilege afforded by Whiteness (Hubbard, 1980). As Hubbard indicated, foreign language education was traditionally elitist, primarily in white affluent schools excluding African Americans' participation. We see similar trends today with the distribution of TWDLE programs in predominantly white affluent schools and within schools and school districts notice the privilege that Whiteness affords parents in securing their children spots in the program. In this sense, Whiteness allows for the manipulation of this minority language as a resource to then further empower white subjects. In many school settings, certain habits or practices have been appropriated as "acting White", and sometimes African-American students critique each other for assimilating and enacting portrayals of Whiteness. Some of the participants' comments alluded to learning Spanish as an element of Whiteness and questioned this form of "assimilation."

Although she was not in favor of the imbalance, Ms. Lloyd asserted the perception that White people are of greater representation in the international and multilingual contexts of the U.S. as opposed to African-Americans. Mr. Williamson also pointed out the large representation of White students in TWDLE programs and discussed White parents' aptness to secure a spot for their English-speaking children. He accredited their White cultural capital with being able to find economic and personnel support for the programs through PTA involvement and shared the opinion that they were ahead of the game in ensuring the best academic, linguistic, and professional outcome for their children through bilingual education. Mr. Carter, Mr. Dixon, and Ms. Edmonds all expressed concern that Black students were being left out of TWDLE programs and once again being marginalized, alienated, and deprived while their white counterparts flourished.

Mr. Williamson also suggested the resistance of some Black folk to Spanish instruction by calling it "another imposed language", following up with "C'mon now," demonstrating a sense of exhaustion directed at the oppressive climate of dominant society. This idea of Spanish as a colonial authority, a tool of the oppressor, could lead to widespread disregard for or even rejection of bilingual education especially if received as a top-down mandate. When Springwall ISD approaches the topic of TWDLE in predominantly Black schools, stakeholders should be aware and cautious of the implications of Spanish and bilingualism when perceived as elements of Whiteness and therefore instruments of oppression.

**Black bilingualism**

*"Language is power. He who knows the most language knows the most power. People who are not seeking power... power doesn't resonate with them... Black people haven't been taught to see themselves as powerful. Language is a vehicle by which people can gain power but we got to get them to see that. It's a behavior that has to be learned." - Mr. Williamson*

*"Some people say, 'International stuff is for White people. It doesn't affect us. It's not for us.' There are so many other people, languages, ethnicities, cultures that we need to learn about… Black people still licking their wounds from civil rights, from slavery. We got to get on our feet and make our place in society." -Ms. Lloyd*

"*We're the best at everything we do. We are flexible. We adapt. We are survivors. We are kings and queens. This melanin don't lie, baby! Everybody idolizes us and the things that we do… Our clothes, our music, our sports… They want to be like us but nobody really wants to live in the conditions that we do and face the reality of being Black in America." –Mr. Carter*

"Ultimately, what makes a group a racial group is the *belief* that they are *essentially* different from another group. Racial essentialism means that groups are seen as possessing an essence --- a natural, supernatural, or mystical characteristic ---that makes them share a fundamental similarity with all members of the group and a fundamental difference from non-members" (Austin, 2006, p. 12). Austin explained that racial essence transcends time, space, and context and is shared by all members of a group, in this case all current and past members of the African diaspora. Racial ideologies and identities, Austin states, can be influenced by their surroundings and are complex and fluid for each member of a group. Each participant in this study articulated a conviction of Blackness, an embodied racial identity that encompasses the shared Black essence but has taken on different forms and meanings in each of their lives. The

participants' attitudes towards Spanish and bilingualism were influenced by their own racial ideologies, and some saw the potential for Spanish to be integrated into the evolving identity of Blackness.

Mr. Williamson and Ms. Lloyd are two African-Americans who display an interest in and value of multilingualism, and in their interviews, both critiqued the underrepresentation of African-Americans in multilingual and international contexts. Furthermore, there was an underlying association of representation with power, and by taking on this bilingualism project and inserting themselves in these historically White spheres, they were commanding respect for their race. Now by promoting bilingualism among African-American children, they were participating in a racial uplift project, "lifting as we climb' with the intentions of distorting the traditionally White/language minority binary of multilingual circles in the U.S. While acknowledging the implications of their people's history, they both saw themselves as activists prepared to do what they can to improve the current situation of their race. They both affiliated promoting bilingualism with activism, as they perceive language and communication as tools to be used in negotiating power relations in the U.S.

In the most hopeful of scenarios, both Mr. Williamson and Ms. Lloyd communicated the possibility of Spanish as an extension of Blackness and bilingualism as a tool in an act of resistance. This would be the most fruitful intended outcome of African-American student participation in a TWDLE program. When revisiting the benefits of learning an additional language, personal improvements including a heightened self-concept, stronger cultural identity, and native language mastery, wider

opportunities and choices in academic, professional, economic, and travel outcomes, as well as social implications supporting a broader worldview and an appreciation for cultural pluralism all speak directly to these hopes.

Through the sociocultural content and classroom structure, African-American students could be afforded the opportunity to embody their Blackness in the TWDLE program. Reyes (2007) praised TWDLE programs for contributing to the positive identity development for all of its students through its appreciation for and incorporation of multiculturalism. Also in TWDLE programs, African-American students who are typically marginalized in U.S. classrooms could be centered as English models for Spanish-speaking students to learn from, which Mr. Dixon's comment alluded to. Lastly, as Ms. Lloyd pointed out, Black Latino populations throughout Latin America with whom African-Americans may have shared histories could be examples that further develop Black students' identity.

As Mr. Williamson and Ms. Lloyd expressed, TWDLE programs that facilitate the acquisition of Spanish position bilingualism as a resource. As community activists, both participants argued that the African-American community could use this tool of bilingualism to its advantage in order to assert power, advance economically, and unite with other oppressed peoples. They both saw bilingualism as a method of combatting the "us" versus "them" mentality that is sometimes pervasive amongst oppressed groups as it is a strategy that grants continued reign to the group in power. Mr. Williamson and Ms. Lloyd both suggest that by destroying this linguistic boundary between African-

Americans and Latinos, opportunities for unity and strength in the quest for civil rights for the groups will emerge.

In this study, both participants discussed the Springwall African-American community's limited ability to connect with the Latino/immigrant community. It is noteworthy that Mr. Williamson and Ms. Lloyd accredited the monolingualism of the Black community as the boundary rather than that of the Latino community, speaking to their positions in support of Spanish language acquisition and in contrast to typical English-only discourse. This reflection and initiative represents a facet of the racial uplift ideology in which Black people strive to engage in self-criticism with the intended outcome of empowerment and constant improvement.

In this sense, African-American student participation in TWDLE and the acquisition of Spanish-English bilingualism provides various avenues for acts of resistance against current systems of power and oppression. Through the embodiment of Blackness, tools for academic and economic wellbeing, and the unification with other oppressed peoples, all members of the community could potentially benefit from Black participation in the TWDLE program.

### SPANISH AS A NEW CODE OF POWER

At the same time, it is imperative that we push back on the notion of Spanish as power when employing Flores and Rosa's raciolinguistic theoretical framework. Delpit (1988, 2006) argued that oppressed students such as African Americans should integrate elements of the "culture of power" into their repertoires to be able to cede access to the privileges, benefits, and decisions enjoyed by the dominant group. For example, she

identified Standard American English as a "code of power" that students should be taught and be able to utilize as it will enable their participation in the powerful spheres of society. In their piece on the appropriateness of language, Nelson and Flores critiqued Delpit's "codes of power" argument for the ways in which it reifies and sustains the dominance of monoglossic, hegemonic white language practices (2015). They argued the codes of power are still purported as an objective tool set that when used properly, will lead to upward socioeconomic mobility. They suggested that this notion simply reifies the age-old meritocratic myth suggesting that "access to codes of power and the ability to use these codes when appropriate will somehow enable racialized populations to overcome the white supremacy that permeates U.S. society" (p. 166). If we adhere to the notion of Spanish as a new code of power, we run the risk of falsely identifying the acquisition of Spanish as a tool for success for African Americans without challenging and eliminating the white gaze from the white listening subject that would now trail and degrade them even as they speak standardized English and Spanish. As Flores and Rosa argued, we need not "simply add codes of power or other appropriate forms [of language] but… engage with, confront, and ultimately dismantle the racialized hierarchy of U.S. society" (p. 167). While arguing for access and equity for African American students within the context of TWDLE, it is important that we maintain ever present our awareness of the systems of raciolinguistic hierarchy and oppression and look for language education that disrupts their pervasiveness.

## Recommendations

This study explored the language ideologies of African Americans towards Spanish-English bilingualism with the intention of contributing valuable perspectives to be considered in the implementation of TWDLE programs. While TWDLE programs have potential to provide an equitable educational experience to their participants, African Americans are experiencing stark underrepresentation in bilingual programs as compared to white and Latino students (Thomas & Collier, 2011; Center for Applied Linguistics, 2008). By examining the existing language orientations in a student population's community, schools and districts could be more prepared to design and develop their language programs to serve the needs of and appeal to the community. From the data analysis of the interviewees in this study, I have identified three ideas that Springwall ISD could consider to better implement a TWDLE that would include African American students.

### FOCUS ON CROSS-CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC/PROFESSIONAL BENEFITS

In his review of the research surrounding world languages education in the U.S., Tochon (2009) explored various benefits of and therefore motivations for foreign language study. Featured in the article was a summary of reasons to learn another language organized by Trimnell (2005), which have been listed below.

1. Increasing global understanding.
2. Improving employment potential.
3. Increasing native language ability.
4. Sharpening cognitive and life skills.
5. Increasing chances of entry into college or graduate school.
6. Appreciating international literature, music, and film.
7. Making travel more feasible and enjoyable.

8. Increasing understanding of oneself and one's culture.
9. Making lifelong friends.

(Tochon, 2009, pg. 656).

This list reminds us that individuals may be motivated to learn a language for different reasons at different points in their lives. These reasons may differ depending on one's environment or life situation or based on the nature of the language they are choosing to learn. However, when looking at elective language learners in a TWDLE setting, we are involving individuals whose decision to learn another language has been made not only at a very young age but also by someone else. With this in mind, we have to carefully analyze which factors might lead a *parent* to enroll his/her child in a TWDLE and which benefits s/he anticipates as outcomes.

When promoting participation in TWDLE programs, researchers and educators often focus on the cognitive and academic benefits. Standardized test scores equated with academic achievement are often used as the measure of effectiveness of DLE programs, and data demonstrating DLE students outperforming their peers in English-only classes is a common argument to sell DL education (Gómez, Freeman & Freeman, 2005; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005, Thomas & Collier, 2011).

The perspectives of this study's participants propose a different approach to bilingualism in the African-American community. While they understand and value the academic and cognitive benefits, their primary motivations for encouraging Spanish language acquisition are rooted in a. economic/employment and b. cross-cultural benefits.

Developing understanding between the Latino and African-American populations in Springwall is a main goal the Williamson Group hopes to achieve through its Spanish immersion program. By equipping students with the necessary language to break down the "boundary" between the two communities, bilingualism becomes the bridge that leads to more harmonious interactions (Galindo, 1997). The participants also stressed repeatedly the economic and professional benefits that could come from speaking Spanish. Mr. Williamson in particular strongly believes that bilingualism makes an individual more marketable and sees a diverse linguistic repertoire as crucial in preparing students to be competitive in the future job market.

The partiality of the participants' comments towards the cross-cultural and economic benefits of foreign language study are noteworthy because it redirects the conversation about why one should enroll his/her child in a TWDLE program. It broadens our understanding of the purposes of TWDLE instruction and reminds us that families might be motivated by and expecting different benefits from their child's participation. While the typical English-speaking group demographic which is White and middle-class might be readily captivated by the academic or cognitive benefits of TWDLE, the findings in this study suggest that promoters of TWDLE in an atypical English-speaker setting might need to draw on other benefits to interest parents. As Freeman recommended, exploring language ideologies and dispositions of a community should be a crucial component of the implementation process of a bilingual program (2004). As Springwall continues in the expansion of the DLE program, the district

should prioritize active engagement and discussion in the perceptions of Spanish-English bilingualism and its implications in the classroom.

### PAY ATTENTION TO EQUITY AND RACE

TWDL programs present the possibility to be transformative on a grand scale if districts pay attention to equity for student groups who are consistently marginalized by the system. By utilizing a bilingual education program that fosters the native or heritage language of a given group, districts make an attempt at linguistic and cultural equity for students who have previously been denied this right, but educational equity for other marginalized groups should not be forgotten. Stakeholders at all levels should also pay attention to racial equity and discuss how the DL program will serve students not inherently prioritized in the design of a DL education such as African American students. Since numbers can reach a broader audience, especially in our current educational climate of accountability, districts with dual language could disaggregate data to generate this conversation at the administrative, community, and elected-official levels.

At the same time districts need to be aware of the possible racial implications at play from African Americans' raciolinguistic positioning and that of Latin@s and of a figurative or literal white school district. There could be tensions, misunderstandings, miscommunications, and ideologies all affecting families' decisions and interactions as they navigate a school system that has historically marginalized and demoralized them. Districts should be prepared to engage in alternative tactics when conducting this conversation understanding the historical and current underpinnings of African American education. Making alliances in the African American community through community

centers, pre-schools, and churches would provide entry points for conversations on the value of bilingualism as an economic and social commodity. African American and other marginalized groups deserve information and opportunities for authentic dialogue in order to make an informed choice about whether or not to participate in TWDL programs.

### AGENCY AND CHOICE

Lastly it is important that districts engage in and support the notion of choice when it comes to families' educational decisions for their children. This is of particular significance for the African American community as agency is often in counter-hegemonic acts. Many of the participants expressed resistance to the idea of Spanish being imposed upon them, and they argued for the ability to choose which language they would like to learn, be it out of personal interest or as an informed financial decision. Districts, in responding to the desires of their student community, should engage in conversations assessing what is the actual second language of choice and work to honor the requests of parents as best they can.

## Conclusion

Powerful sustainable community projects best begin with an assessment of the desires, goals, and resources at hand. By these guidelines, DLE programs would emerge from a collaborative effort between the district and local stakeholders to uncover the existing language ideologies and anticipated outcomes of the school community. With this information, the team of stakeholders working for DLE in Springwall could move forward in better designing their TWDLE programs to include African-American students. This study only represents the perspectives of five African-Americans living in Springwall, only one of whom is a current parent of a student in Springwall ISD. The first action steps would be to engage in similar conversations with parents and teachers to gather a wider range of opinions and language orientations. Further research should assess the influence of these ideologies on parents' enrollment or participation in the TWDLE programs so as to give an accurate snapshot of what is occurring in the neighborhoods and school communities with and/or without TWDLE programs. The interactions between ideologies and participation would serve as to inform the district in better ways to equitably design their approaches to marketing TWDLE programs and recruiting parent and student involvement. By focusing on the needs and perspectives of the community voices, the district can better prepare their DLE program to fulfill the expectations of the school involved.

At the same time, as previously stated, Dual Language programs will not be solely responsible for addressing educational equity issues in U.S. schools. While TWDLE programs could serve African-American students through the many benefits of

learning in a bilingual environment, community stakeholders and the district personnel must not lose a critical lens in assessing DLE programs' ability to fostering exemplary development of the whole African-American child. TWDLE programs should resist the continuation of deficit thinking and the marginalization of Black students and their life experiences by constant critical reflection and evaluation. At the same time, districts should also support the choice for a community to dissent from bilingual education, be it an active and informed decision. Truthfully, as Flores and Rosa (2015) argued, access to bilingualism as a "code of power" should not be what guarantees a student group's educational and lifelong success but rather the committed collaboration that communities, families, schools, teachers, and students engage in each and everyday.

# Appendix

## Interview Protocol

1. What is bilingualism to you? What does a bilingual person look like? What do they do?
2. What is the value of bilingualism?
3. Why should (African-American) students learn another language? Why should (African-American) students learn Spanish? Why should (African-American) students learn Spanish in Texas?
4. What do you know about Dual Language programs? Why or why not should families put their children in a DL program?
5. What should parents know about their child participating in a DL program?
6. What are some problematic consequences, if any, of African-American students becoming bilingual or participating in a DL program?
7. What obstacles do African American families face in becoming bilingual?
8. What are strengths that African American children/families bring to a Dual Language program?
9. Describe an ideal educational model for African American students.

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